

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British Trade*, &c.

From Thursday, March 25. to Saturday, March 27. 1714.

*The Success the Dutch have had in their former Encroachments upon our Trade.**They have worm'd us quite out of several considerable Branches of our Commerce, particularly the Greenland Trade, the Trade to Dantzick, and our Trade to the Spice-Islands in the East-Indies.**The latter not enlarged on, purely to avoid raising a National hatred against the Dutch.**They are now worming us out of the French Trade.**They carry on all our French Trade for us by means of our Clandestine Traders.**Their Men of War bring vast Quantities of French Goods, and being free from our search, are open Markets of Prohibited Goods.*

HAVING in the two last *MERCATORS* shewn in eight Heads or Branches, where the Dutch are our Rivals in Trade, and that very much to our Disadvantage; The *MERCATOR* comes now to shew some Branches of our Trade which the Dutch have entirely worm'd us out of, and gotten quite away from us; whether by Fraud, or Force, or by any Methods of Trade, is not the Question here, for the *MERCATOR* is not making Satire against the Dutch, but calmly awakening our People to know their true Interests in Trade, and not be fool'd out of their Advantages in Commerce by their Friends, any more than by their Enemies. Of the Trades then which we once possessed and flourished in, and which the Dutch have gotten from us, these are some;

1. *The Greenland Trade.* It is needless to look back to Queen Elizabeth's time, or to some part of King James the First's time, and to the Year 1640. when the English had a flourishing Trade in the whole Fishing, as it is called. It is plain, that the Dutch by several steps taken in the time of the Parliament-Dutch War, as it was called, first ruin'd our Trade to Greenland; they having always a Squadron of Men attending their Fleet, we could not appear in those Seas, our Trade not being so great there as to make it worth our Concern to defend at that price: It is true, that several Attempts have been made to recover this Trade, and particularly by the late Greenland Company. But all those Attempts have come to nothing, and our Seamen being grown quite out of use of the Trade, and grown unskill'd in Harponeering, we were fain to get Dutchmen to carry with us for the Work, when we did attempt it: But the Dutch being now become Masters of it, are able to sell us the Oil cheaper than we could fetch it; and so the Company laid down; And we now send not One Ship to Greenland, nor have we meddled in it. for some Years past, or perhaps are ever likely to meddle with it again.

2. The next is the *Trade to Dantzick.* Time was, that we had a large Factory of English Merchants at

Dantzick, and sent very great Quantities of English Woollen Manufactures to that Port; But the Dutch, who Rival'd us in that Trade on several Accounts, have so worm'd us out of it, that our part in it now, is not worth Naming; and if any of our Woollen Manufactures are carry'd to Dantzick, the Dutch are both the Factors and the Carriers: The Reasons of this alteration are too many to enter upon here; it is enough to our present purpose, that the Fact is True, for which the *MERCATOR* appeals to the experienced East-Country Merchants now upon the Exchange: That whereas the Town of Dantzick alone has taken off from England above One hundred and Fifty thousand Pounds a Year in Woollen Manufactures only, not one Eighth part of that Value is now sent thither from England: If they have the same Quantity of Goods, it is from Holland, among which, questionless they put off as many as they can of their own; and we lose both the Freight and Factorage of our own Manufactures to the Dutch, besides a most Injurious Decay of our Shipping and Seamen.

3. The Third Article is, *The Spice Trade of the East-Indies*; Into which we were fairly Entred in the Years 1650 to 1663; And if the *MERCATOR* omits giving an Historical Account how, and in what manner we were driven out of it by the Dutch in time of full Peace, 'tis to Convince the Opposers that the *MERCATOR* is not designed to rip up old National Grudges, write Satires, or revive the Animosities that bringing to Mind such a dreadful History must make between us and the Dutch, whom, in other Matters, he is willing to esteem our good Friends, and faithful Allies.

Thus three Branches of our Commerce are entirely lost to the Dutch, whether by their good Management, or our bad, their Craft, or our Folly and Stupidity, is a Question yet undetermin'd.

How fair they bid now to get the French Trade from us, while they are busie perswading us to believe that it is hurtful to us, so that we might take no notice of their



is to Engross it, this remains to be spoken
we are preparing not to see it, till it is too

First; The *MERCATOR* desires all the
ing part of the Nation to examine their
erience, and the practice of the Dutch with us,
Affair, during the whole War, and even at this
How has the French Trade to Britain been driven
during the late Prohibitions of Commerce? Has it not
been thro' the Hands of the Dutch? Have not the
Dutch been the Mediums and Instruments of Clande-
stine Trade, to pour in French Goods upon us by stealth,
to the Ruine of the Fair Merchant, who pays Customs,
and Imports nothing but what may be legally Imported?

Have not the Dutch Men of War, who came always
as Convoys to the Trade, and were constantly Running
between them and us, been as so many floating Mar-
kets of Prohibited Goods? Did they not all come loa-
den like Merchants Ships, and Run perpetually vast
Quantities of Foreign Goods upon us, under the pro-
tection of their Commissions, our Custom-house Officers
being not permitted to visit the Men of War?

Whence comes the great Quantities of French Brandy
that are, to this Day, Run on Shore on the whole
Coast of Britain, especially in Scotland and the North
of England, did it not all come from Holland? Whence
came all that Quantity of Wine and Brandy which was
poured into Scotland between the passing of the Union
and the first of May following, when it was to take
place, was it not almost all from Holland, to our infi-
nite prejudice?

Did not Two Dutch Men of War, about Three Years
ago, Run on Shore above 300 Ton of French Goods
in one Port in this Island, among which was a very
great Quantity of Alamodes and Lustrings, and how
they escaped, is also well known?

Did not the Dutch buy a great Quantity of Alamodes
and Lustrings at Roan last Year, which an eminent
English Merchant who was concern'd in them, sent
word were for our Wise Nation's Consumption, who
Prohibit things from one Country in such a manner, as
if it was only to let another Country bring them in?

This was the Trade the Dutch drove with us all the
War, while they enjoyed an open Trade with France,
and ours was Prohibited; and to preserve this Trade
to themselves it is, that they are so busie and so diligent
now to keep us out of the French Trade, (viz.) That
the stream of fraudulent Trade may continue, and may
run thro' their Channels.

To bring this to a short Conclusion; It would be a
good answer to the Dutch, to say at once, If you will
Prohibit Trade with France we will do so too, and not
otherwise?

If this were to be the Case, you should see the Dutch
Emissaries among us, change their Notes immediately,
and Argue as warmly for the Advantages of the French
Commerce, and for our opening the French Commerce,
as they do now for shutting it up: This is evident, by
their constant practice during the whole War; when,
tho' we were so foolish to prohibit our Trade with
France, they kept an open Trade with them all the
while; nor could we ever prevail with them to do other-
wise.



The Reason was plain, by that free Entercourse they
Enjoyed two Advantages; 1. They Conveyed all the
English Goods which France wanted into France, upon
their own Accounts, and with the Advantage of their
own Shipping, such as Lead, Corn, Sugars, Tobacco,
Cotton, Dying-Woods, Block-Tin, and even Woollen
Manufactures. 2. They Carried the whole Employ of our
Clandestine Traders before them, and all the Trade in
Brandy and French Silks, which has been prodigious
great here, has been in their own Hands.

These are substantial Reasons why the Dutch resolved
never to part with the French Trade during the War,
and why they strive to keep us out of it during the
Peace: But our Eyes are not open to it.

And let any one see, if they can, which way to put an
end to Clandestine Trade, if the Dutch contrivance
abovesaid continue, and we go on to rob Ourselves, as
we have done for some Years past, in order to enrich
our Neighbours.

Our poor ignorant People cry out of the danger of
French Silks, and French Wines, and French Brandy
over-running us, notwithstanding the high Duties; and
so to prevent it, they are willing to let them over-run
us, paying no Duties at all, which is tenfold worse, and
perfectly ruinous to our Merchants.

Nor do they propose, or indeed can they, any Me-
thod how to prevent these Clandestine Importations,
unless an Army of Officers were entertained, and indeed
not then neither, while the Profit is so great, as that it
enables the Importer to outbid the Queen in the Encou-
ragement to the Officers, and while the Bribe can so
much out-run the Salary, that the Officers themselves
too often find their Account in Conniving.

Nor can the Government itself prevent it. The
Encouragement to the Officers to do their Duty is pre-
carious, when they are allowed to Condemn Goods at
the Queen's Charge, they run the Government into so
many frivolous and unjust Seizures and Suits, as they
become even a Clog and a Charge to the Exchequer it
self, and a National Grievance to the Subject, by Op-
pression and Vexation; And, on the other Hand, if
the Officer is obliged to Condemn what he Seizes at his
own Hazard and Expence, he finds so much danger of
Loss, and so little certain Gain, that he dreads the ha-
zard, and chooses to break in upon his Duty, and take
a share of the Spoil of his Country.

How else comes it to pass, that French Brandy is to
be bought all over Britain, and French Lustrings in
every Mercers Shop, and that for less Money sometimes
than the just Duties of them, if they were legally Im-
ported, amount too? And all this Trade is carried on
by the Dutch.

Can we then be to seek of a Reason why the Dutch,
and all their Friends here, are against our bringing the
French Trade to such a pass, as should prevent this Clan-
destine Trade, and as should enable us to be Masters of
our own Commerce?

Thus, it is plain, the Dutch are our Rivals in Trade
in general; have worm'd us out of some Branches of
our Trade already, and, by their present Artifice, bid
fair to supplant us in the French Trade, and make us
carry it on, at second hand, thro' Holland.

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